ABSTRACT

An adjunct processor controls an inter-fabric service link (IFSL) coupled to at least two independent SAN switching networks. The inter-fabric service link is coupled between multiple switching fabrics to allow the attached switching fabrics to be logically managed as a single entity while still being physically independent of each other. The IFSL does not transmit nor receive data being transmitted from a storage device to a host; rather, only management data is transmitted along the IFSL. The IFSL includes an inter-fabric adjunct processor, and a plurality of connections to the attached switching fabrics on which the IFSL communicates with IFSL agents operating on various switching elements within the attached switching fabrics. IFSL agents generate management data corresponding to the particular switching element on which the agent operates. This management data is intermittently transmitted to the IFSL for processing. Upon receipt of this management data, the IFSL updates a fabric map containing the corresponding switching element according to the received management data. As a result, the IFSL has a current snapshot of the status and functionability of each of the switching elements within the attached switching fabrics. Additionally, the IFSL may respond to the received management data by transmitting operation requests to a switching element.